

## Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-10 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 AID-05

EB-07 /074 R

66611

DRAFTED BY: ARA/CEN/BZE:GAGOWEN:RP

APPROVED BY: ARA/CEN:DLAZAR (DRAFT)

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R 131599Z AUG 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMCONSUL BELIZE

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MEXICO

USCINCSO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, BH

SUBJECT: MANCHESTER GUARDIAN ARTICLE ON BELIZE DISPUTE

REF: USUN 3587

1. BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE. AUGUST 10 EDITION OF WASHINGTON POST REPRINTED RECENT MANCHESTER GUARDIAN ARTICLE BY GREG CHAMBERLIN ON DEVELOPMENTS CONCERNING SEARCH FOR SOLUTION TO BELIZE DISPUTE. ARTICLE IS OF INTEREST CHIEFLY FOR REFERENCES TO PREPARATIONS FOR UPCOMING UNGA SESSION, RECENT GUATEMALAN ACTIONS VIS-A-VIS BELIZE, AND POLITICAL STATUS OF PREMIER PRICE'S GOVERNMENT. ARTICLE DATED LONDON, BUT APPEARS TO BE DERIVED FROM SOURCES IN BOTH BELIZE AND UK. EVIDENCE AVAILABLE TO DEPARTMENT CONTRADICTS STATEMENT THAT HMG MAY BE PLANNING OWN INITIATIVE ON BELIZE IN UNGA (SEE REFTTEL). ANY COMMENTS OR CLARIFICATIONS WHICH POST MAY BE ABLE TO PROVIDE IN RESPONSE  
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WOULD BE APPRECIATED AND OF INTEREST. END LIMITED

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2. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. TEXT OF ARTICLE FOLLOWS: BEGIN  
QUOTE: BRITAIN HAS RUN INTO NEW DIFFICULTIES IN EFFORTS TO  
GET RID OF THE LARGEST REMAINING PIECE OF TERRITORY IN ITS  
ONCE VAST COLONIAL EMPIRE. MANY OF THE 130,000 INHABI-  
TANTS OF BELIZE (BRITISH HONDURAS) HESITATE TO BECOME

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INDEPENDENT FOR FEAR THEY WILL AWAKE ONE MORNING TO FIND  
TROOPS FROM NEIGHBORING GUATEMALA IN THE STREETS.

THE LATEST ROUND OF TALKS OVER GUATEMALA'S 150-YEAR CLAIM  
TO THE TERRITORY COLLAPSED LAST MONTH AFTER ONLY ONE DAY.  
BRITAIN REJECTED A GUATEMALAN COMPROMISE PROPOSAL TO  
SLICE THE 8,900-SQUARE MILE COLONY IN HALF WITH GUATEMALA  
ANNEXING THE SOUTHERN PORTION.  
GUATEMALA MAINTAINS THAT BRITAIN HAS VIOLATED THE 1859  
TREATY SETTING THE BORDERS OF THE COLONY. THE PACT CALLED  
FOR BRITAIN TO CONSTRUCT A HIGHWAY FROM GUATEMALA CITY TO  
THE ATLANTIC COAST, WHICH IT NEVER DID. GUATEMALA DECLARED  
THE TREATY VOID IN 1931, AND NUMEROUS ATTEMPTS TO MEDIATE  
THE DISPUTE HAVE FAILED.

THE GUATEMALANS, SPURRED BY REPORTS OF OIL IN BELIZE, HAVE  
BEGUN A NEW ROUND OF SABRE-RATTLING AND INTERNATIONAL  
LOBBYING. BRITAIN IS EXPECTED TO ACCUSE GUATEMALA AT THE  
U.N. GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN SEPTEMBER OF PREVENTING BELIZE  
FROM ATTAINING THE INDEPENDENCE BRITAIN SAYS THE COLONY CAN  
HAVE WHENEVER IT LIKES.

APART FROM THIS SHOW OF PROTECTION, THERE IS LITTLE TO  
COMFORT THE BELIZEANS, A MIXTURE OF SPANISH-SPEAKING LATINOS  
AND INDIANS AND ENGLISH-SPEAKING BLACKS.

A TIGHTENING OF BORDER CONTROLS AND JAMMING OF RADIO BELIZE  
IN RURAL AREAS HAS BEEN ADDED RECENTLY TO THE ANTI-BRITISH  
RHETORIC OF GUATEMALA'S PRESS AND THE DECLARATIONS OF ITS  
DIPLOMATS ON THE BELIZE QUESTION.

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GUATEMALA CONTINUES TO HOLD WITHOUT TRIAL A BELIZEAN  
TANKER CAPTAIN, HUBER EILEY AND THREE OF HIS CREW, WHO WERE  
ARRESTED FOUR MONTHS AGO, WHEN THEIR SHIP SANK AND ITS  
CARGO OF FUEL OIL FOULED THE GUATEMALAN COAST. GUATEMALA  
IS SAID TO BE SEEKING ABOUT \$100 MILLION IN COMPENSATION.

COUNTRYWIDE ANTI-GUATEMALA DEMONSTRATIONS HAVE BEEN  
STAGED BY THE INCREASINGLY POWERFUL OPPOSITION PARTIES IN

BELIZE. THE GUATEMALAN CONSULATE IN BELIZE CITY HAS BEEN STONED.

THE SECRET DIPLOMACY UNDERTAKEN BY BELIZEAN PRIME MINISTER GEORGE PRICE OVER THE PAST SEVEN YEARS TO OBTAIN A DEFENSE GUARANTEE AGAINST A POST-INDEPENDENCE GUATEMALAN INVASION HAS BEEN FRUITLESS.

BRITISH PRIME MINISTER HAROLD WILSON RECENTLY RULED OUT A BRITISH DEFENSE GUARANTEE, AND THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR TO

MEXICO EVEN HINTED THAT BELIZE MIGHT LIKE TO BE ANNEXED BY GUATEMALA. CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES HAVE ALSO TURNED A DEAF EAR.

PRICE ALSO HAS FAILED TO MAKE A PUBLIC DENT IN THE SOLID SYMPATHY FOR GUATEMALA BY THE REST OF CENTRAL AMERICA. VENEZUELA, WHICH HAD A LENGTHY DISPUTE WITH BRITAIN OVER THE BORDER OF A COLONY, HAS DECLARED ITS SUPPORT FOR GUATEMALA.

THE ONLY PLUS FOR BELIZE RECENTLY WAS THE FORMAL RENUNCIATION EARLIER THIS MONTH OF MEXICO'S LONG-STANDING BUT INACTIVE CLAIM TO BELIZE BY PRESIDENT LUIS ECHEVERIA.

IRONICALLY, IN SPITE OF HIS TIRELESS EFFORTS, THERE IS DIMINISHING CONFIDENCE AT HOME IN PRICE, WHOSE LONG-ENTRENCHED PEOPLE'S UNITED PARTY CAME WITHIN 17 VOTES OF LOSING ITS PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY IN OCTOBER'S ELECTIONS.

IN SPITE OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S DENIALS, THE CONSERVATIVE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TIVE OPPOSITION ACCUSES HIM OF BEING "SOFT" ON GUATEMALA AND ALLEGES THAT HE IS PREPARED TO GIVE AWAY PART OF SOUTHERN BELIZE IN EXCHANGE FOR A "MAKE-BELIEVE STATEMENT" AND INDEPENDENCE.

PRICE HAS CAREFULLY KEPT THE OPPOSITION OUT OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH GUATEMALA. THE OPPOSITION LEADER, DEAN LINDO, IS CAMPAIGNING AGAINST INDEPENDENCE "FOR THE TIME BEING" OR AT LEAST BEFORE ANY SETTLEMENT IS REACHED WITH GUATEMALA. END QUOTE. KISSINGER

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PRESS COMMENTS, POLITICAL SITUATION, MILITARY PLANS, BOUNDARY CLAIMS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 13 AUG 1975  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** ShawDG  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1975STATE191504  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** ARA/CEN/BZE:GAGOWEN:RP  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D750280-0938  
**From:** STATE  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1975/newtext/t19750856/aaaabwxa.tel  
**Line Count:** 164  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ORIGIN ARA  
**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 75 USUN NEW YORK 3587  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** ShawDG  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 25 JUN 2003  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <25 JUN 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <12 NOV 2003 by ShawDG>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
06 JUL 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** MANCHESTER GUARDIAN ARTICLE ON BELIZE DISPUTE  
**TAGS:** PFOR, PINT, MARR, BH, GT, UNGA, MANCHESTER GUARDIAN  
**To:** BELIZE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006